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THE RAPPINGS.

WITCHES, fairies, spectres, oracles, and second-sight, having successively had their day, a new delusion was required wherewith to interest the public mind, and, behold! the want is supplied. The new manifestation consists in Rappings. America has the merit of discovering, or at least of perfecting, this ghostly wonder. England, on the occasion of the Cock-lane Ghost, was favoured with rappings to a respectable extent; and everybody knows that unaccountable sounds of the rapping genus have, from time immemorial, been the sure signal of domestic calamities. But all these occasional and arbitrary demonstrations of *something*, are only the skirmishing forerunners of the grand spiritual battery now in operation in the United States. Over the whole country, rapping goes on as a national institution. Every town of any size is provided with a circle of believers, to whom rapping is vouchsafed. Philadelphia alone has 300 such mystic circles; and, altogether, the States are said to have 30,000—each with its attendant spirits, all of whom are rapping most industriously for the edification of a credulous public. As rappings are probably about to begin on an equally important scale in England—for they will be sure to come, if sought after—it may be of use to say a word beforehand respecting their maneuvres.

Rappings commenced in America in what may be called a legitimate manner. One night, in the year 1847, the sound of a knocking at the street-door was heard in the house of a Mr Weekman, in the village of Hydesville, Wayne County, state of New York. When the door was opened, nobody was to be seen. It was immediately shut. Again a loud knocking was heard. Opened once more; no one was visible. From this time, rappings by invisible agency were carried on in a very strange way, much to the annoyance of Mr Weekman; and for this, or some other cause, he left the house, when it became occupied by Dr John D. Fox and his family. Mrs Fox and the Misses Fox have ever since had wonderful things to tell of the spiritual world, and have become the accredited media or prophetesses of the rappings. Mrs Fox's history of the rapping-demonstration is quite as good as Defoe's account of Mrs Veal's ghost.

Late in a certain night in March 1848, she proceeds to say, 'we concluded to go to bed early, and not let the noise disturb us; if it came, we thought we would not mind it, but try to get a good night's rest. My husband had not gone to bed when we first heard the noise on this evening. I had just lain down. It commenced as usual. I knew it from all other noises I had ever heard in the house. The girls, who slept in

the other bed in the room, heard the noise, and tried to make a similar one by snapping their fingers. The youngest girl is about twelve years old. As fast as she made the noise with her hands or fingers, the sound was followed up in the room. It did not sound different at that time, only it made the same number of sounds that the girl did. When she stopped, the sound itself stopped for a short time. The other girl, who is in her fifteenth year, then spoke in sport, and said: "Now, do just as I do: count one, two, three, four," &c., striking one hand in the other at the same time. The blows which she made were repeated as before. It appeared to answer her by repeating every blow that she made. She only did so once. She then began to be startled; and then I spoke, and said to the noise: "Count ten;" and then it made ten strokes or noises. Then I asked the ages of my different children successively, and it gave a number of raps, corresponding to the ages of my children. I then asked if it was a human being that was making the noise, and if it was, to manifest it by the same noise. There was no noise. I then asked if it was a spirit, and if it was, to manifest it by two sounds. I heard two sounds as soon as the words were spoken. I then asked if an injured spirit, to give me the sound. I then heard the rapping distinctly. I inquired if it was injured in this house. It rapped. Was the injurer living?—same answer. I further understood that its remains were buried under the dwelling; that it was thirty-one years of age, a male, and had left a family of five children, all living. Was the wife living?—silence. Dead?—rapping. How long since?—two raps.'

Attention being now paid to the rappings, it was found they could be methodised, and rules formed for their interpretation. In this new spirit-language, a single rap signified 'Yes,' and the answer 'No,' was indicated by silence. The spirit being asked whether it would spell out a reply if the alphabet were called over, it rapped an affirmative. This was a great step in advance. A printed alphabet being now laid on the table, a person pointed to each letter in succession, and on arriving at the required letter, a rap was heard. The querist then recommenced, until each letter composing the answer was signified. In this way, names and sentences were slowly spelled out, much to the delight of the auditory. When the spirit wanted the alphabet, it always gave five raps. Another feature in the manifestations was soon determined. The spirit appeared to have a will of its own, and would answer only through a favourite interpreter or medium. If this medium was not present, the spirit was exceedingly taciturn. No medium got such ready answers as Margaretta, one of the Misses Fox, aged fourteen; and

it was considered to be a strange circumstance, that when part of Mr Fox's family removed to Rochester, this girl included, 'the sounds accompanied them.' Whether the spirit had been accidentally packed up in the trunks, no one could tell. The sudden arrival of the manifestations at Rochester created, as may be supposed, an immense sensation. A public meeting was called, to consider what should be done; and a committee having been formed to make all necessary investigations, several learned dignitaries took the matter in hand. It was of no use; all failed to arrive at any satisfactory solution of the mystery.

In November 1849, the rappings had attained a singular pitch of audacity. Acting on the aggressive, they signified that the Fox family had a duty to perform, and ought to propagate a knowledge of the new spiritual manifestation. The fame of the rappings was consequently sounded far and wide, and reverend divines crowded to the shrine, of which Mrs Fox and her three daughters were the priestesses. The usual method of invoking the spirits was for a select party to assemble round a table, and to put and receive answers through a medium; and thus clergymen, literary men, young ladies, and others, waited the ghostly revelations in awestruck silence. The Rev. C. Hammond, in his testimony to the rappings, mentions that the spirits did not always confine themselves to raps, but sometimes proceeded to lift the tables, and knock the furniture about in a very curious way; all of which was vastly entertaining and suggestive. He says: 'On the third visit, I was selected from a half-dozen gentlemen, and directed by these sounds to retire to another apartment, in company with the three sisters and their aged mother. It was about eight o'clock in the evening. A lighted candle was placed on a large table, and we seated ourselves around it. I occupied one side of the table, the mother and youngest daughter the right, and two of the sisters the left, leaving the opposite side of the table vacant. On taking our positions, the sounds were heard, and continued to multiply and become more violent, until every part of the room trembled with their demonstrations. They were unlike any I had heard before. Suddenly, as we were all resting on the table, I felt the side next to me move upward. I pressed upon it heavily, but soon it passed out of the reach of us all, full six feet from me, and at least four from the nearest person to it. I saw distinctly its position; not a thread could have connected it with any of the company without my notice, for I had come to detect imposition, if it could be found. In this position we remained until the question was asked: "Will the spirit move the table back where it was before?"—when back it came, as though it were carried on the head of some one who had not suited his position to a perfect equipoise, the balance being sometimes in favour of one side, and then the other; but it regained its first position.' The reverend testifier adds: 'That any of the company could have performed these things under the circumstances in which we were situated, would require a greater stretch of credulity on my part, than it would to believe it was the work of spirits.'

The Misses Fox, and a married sister named Mrs Fish, now visited New York, for the purpose of spreading the faith. Here, as in Rochester, 'every conceivable test was applied in a manner to satisfy the most sceptical,' but nothing like trick could be elicited.

Fashion taking the thing up, rapping circles were formed, and hosts of people entered into the delusion. Parties were made up to go and have an 'evening with the spirits.' Shades of fathers, mothers, children, and other relatives were called up in a friendly way to reveal themselves, and answer the questions that were put to them. At one of these soirées, a certain Dr J. W. Francis determined to have a chat with the spirits; and no sooner did he propose himself, than he was welcomed with a general roll of knockings from the mysterious agents, who seemed to claim him as an old acquaintance. The following is the account of the colloquy:—'With his proverbial urbanity, seating himself, as if at the bedside of a patient, Dr F. asked, in terms of the most insinuating blandness, whether the spirits present would converse with any member of the company? Would they vouchsafe to speak to his illustrious friend, the world-renowned author, Mr Cooper? Would they converse with the great American poet, Mr Bryant? To these flattering invitations no reply was given. Would they speak to so humble an individual as himself? Loud knocks. Dr F. then asked, fixing on a person: "Was he an American? Was he an Englishman? Was he a Scotchman?" The knocks were loud and unanimous. "Was he a merchant? Was he a lawyer? Was he an author?"—Loud knocks. "Was he a poet?"—Yes, in distinct knocks. "Will you tell his name?"—Here the spirits called for the alphabet, by sounds intelligible to the ghost-seers. It then spelled out B-u-r—when the company indistinctly, but spontaneously, interrupted, by crying out, "Robert Burns." This was the true answer.'

Of course, this was very astonishing; but something more strange was to follow. Notwithstanding that the spirit had declined to enter into conversation with Mr J. Fenimore Cooper—who, alas! has since joined the world of spirits—that gifted person made an attempt to hold discourse with the unseen guest. He was at length listened to, and so the conversation began. "Is the person I inquire about a relative?"—Yes, was at once indicated by the knocks. "A near relative?"—Yes. "A man?"—No answer. "A woman?"—Yes. "A daughter? a mother? a wife?"—No answer. "A sister?"—Yes. Mr C. then asked the number of years since her death. To this an answer was given in rapid and indistinct raps, some counting forty-five, others forty-nine, fifty-four, &c. After considerable parleying as to the manner in which the question should be answered, the consent of the invisible interlocutor was given to knock the years so slowly, that they might be distinctly counted. This was done. Knock—knock—knock—for what seemed over a minute, till the number amounted to fifty, and was unanimously announced by the company. Mr C. now asked: "Did she die of consumption?" naming several diseases, to which no answer was given. "Did she die by accident?"—Yes. "Was she killed by lightning? Was she shot? Was she lost at sea? Did she fall from a carriage? Was she thrown from a horse?"—Yes. Mr Cooper did not pursue his inquiries any further, and stated to the company that the answers were correct—the person alluded to by him being a sister, who, just fifty years ago the present month, was killed by being thrown from a horse!'

A volume could be filled with similar narratives of what, till the present day, is going on in America; and, in fact, a portly volume is produced on the subject—

the author, Mr Henry Spicer,* being to all appearance a thorough believer in the alleged manifestations. The success which attended the *séances* of the Misses Fox, soon induced others to try their hand at calling up spirits, and speedily the country was covered with media. People, when met in evening-parties, would propose to have some spiritual intercourse, and, as if the invisible world were let loose, they seldom were disappointed. Spicer quotes the account given by 'an eye-witness' of what occurred at a meeting in his presence. 'The spirits announced themselves, somewhat unexpectedly, by canting over the solid and ponderous table;' and after several surprising vagaries, the demonstrations increased in force and number.

'The table was actually lifted up from the floor, without the application of a human hand or foot. A table, weighing, I should judge, 100 pounds, was lifted up a foot from the floor, the legs touching nothing. I jumped upon it, but it came up again! It then commenced rocking, without, however, allowing me to slide off, although it canted at least to an angle of 45 degrees. Finally, an almost perpendicular inclination slid me off; and another of the company tried it with the same results. These things all happened in a room, which was light enough to allow of our seeing under and over and all around the table, which was touched by no one except the two persons who, respectively, got upon it to keep it down. We went into a darkened room to see the spiritual flashes of light, said to have been vouchsafed to some investigators. Instead of this, we were greeted with tremendous rappings all about us. Some of the blows on the walls, floor, and tables, within three inches of myself, were astounding. I could hardly produce such violent demonstrations with my fist, though I were to strike with all my might. The very walls shook. Answers to questions were given by concessions of varying force and intonation, according to the character of the spirits communicating. A favourite little daughter of one of the gentlemen present—a stranger from a remote state—who had left the earth in the fourth year of her age, announced her presence by a thick patterning rain of eager and joyful little raps; and in answer to an inward request of her father, she laid her baby hand upon his forehead! This was a man who was *not* a believer in these things; he had never before seen them; but he could not mistake the thrilling feeling of that spirit touch. I also had a similar manifestation, in the character of which I am not deceived. Suddenly, and without any expectation on the part of the company, the medium, Mr Hume, was taken up in the air! I had hold of his hand at the time, and I felt his feet; they were lifted a foot from the floor! He palpitated from head to foot with the contending emotions of joy and fear, which choked his utterance. Again and again he was taken from the floor, and the third time he was carried to the lofty ceiling of the apartment, with which his hands and head came in gentle contact. I felt the distance from the soles of his boots to the floor, and it was nearly three feet. Others touched his feet to satisfy themselves. This statement can be substantiated, if necessary.' No doubt it can! Of these 'eye-witnesses!' What mischief do they not do to the cause of truth!

It cannot, however, be supposed that there were not sceptics. Electricity, ventriloquism, and legerdemain, with certain mechanical contrivances, were each proposed as accounting for the manifestations; but, according to the authorities on the subject, all conjecture failed to explain the rappings in any other way than as a new spiritual development. Here the matter may be said to rest. America remains in a state of astonishment. That any one in our day can be wrought into the belief, that departed spirits are permitted to

revisit the earth for the purpose of overturning tables, and answering all sorts of ridiculous questions, may well excite surprise. But it would seem that the appetite for the marvellous is never to be satiated. The circumstance of 'the spirits' being occasionally guilty of falsehood, does not awaken the suspicions of the credulous—the Misses Fox smoothing away all difficulties, by the simple explanation, that there were 'lying as well as truthful spirits, as they had found out by experience.' What may prove to be a solution of the rappings, may be shrewdly guessed from a single fact: the accomplished media exhibit to the faithful *only on payment of an entrance-fee*. Ah, dollars, dollars, ye are at the bottom of it after all! W. C.

NOTES FROM MR F. HILL'S WORK ON CRIME.

In the article, entitled 'Not so Bad as We Seem,' we gave some idea of a portion of the contents of Mr Hill's book; but without attempting to convey a complete notion of its character and objects. We therefore return to the volume. Let us first indicate that Mr Hill, from his long official concern in the management of criminals, as well as from the reflective character of his intellect, and the temperately benevolent nature of his affections, is singularly well qualified to instruct society on crime and criminals. He has, indeed, his own peculiar opinions on social questions, and with these not nearly the whole of his readers will concur; but it may at least be said, that he advances his views with modesty, and we more than suspect that it is merely a question of time when most of them will be generally admitted and acted upon.

It is a comforting consideration that, contrary to the impression produced by some recent statistical tables, crime is continually diminishing in this country, both in atrocity and in the number of its perpetrators. The returns should rather gratify than afflict us, for they chiefly prove the increased efficiency of the police. Mr Hill mentions a curious and convincing illustration of the fallaciousness of returns of commitments. He states that, when he commenced his inspectorship in Scotland, about twenty years ago, Wigtonshire stood out as a county remarkable for apparent exemption from crime. Yet, at that very time, a local committee reported, that 'the prevalence of petty thefts and poaching, the nuisance of vagrancy, the insecurity of person and property, and the inadequate means of bringing offenders to justice within the county, are matters of notoriety and grave import.' It is another comforting circumstance, that, while the number of offences and commitments may be considerable, the number of offenders may be small. It has been found that the sequestration of twelve persons would, to all appearance, entirely rid a Scotch county of crime. It is to the same effect, that we find one person, not above fifty years old, to have been sixty-seven times in prison. In fact, much of the work of magistrates and judges is a continual regrounding of the same limited materials; and the cost of our criminal procedure is far more than sufficient to furnish handsome pensions to all the criminals in the country.

Mr Hill gives a curious historical chapter, contrasting the former state of crime with the present. The general picture of the past is dark; and some anecdotes of the system of street robbery which once existed in London, read like travellers' accounts of remote and barbarous countries. We have heard that Lord Lynedoch, who died so lately as 1844, had found it necessary, in proceeding through Cavendish Square to a party with his wife, to descend from the carriage and defend it against a highwayman. It was only in 1781, that Horace Walpole wrote the following recital to the Countess of Ossory:—

'Lady Browne and I were, as usual, going to the

* *Sights and Sounds: the Mystery of the Day.* By Henry Spicer, Esq. London: Thomas Bosworth. 1838.

Duchess of Montrose at seven o'clock. The evening was very dark. In the close lane under her park pales, and within twenty yards of the gate, a black figure on horseback pushed by between the chaise and the hedge on my side. I suspected it was a highwayman; and so I found did Lady Browne, for she was speaking, and stopped. To divert her fears, I was just going to say: "Is not that the apothecary going to the duchess?" when I heard a voice cry: "Stop!" and the figure came back to the chaise. I had the presence of mind, before I let down the glass, to take out my watch and stuff it within my waistcoat, under my arm. He said: "Your purses and watches." I replied: "I have no watch." "Then your purse." I gave it to him: it had nine guineas. It was so dark I could not see his hand, but felt him take it. He then asked for Lady Browne's purse, and said: "Don't be frightened; I will not hurt you." I said: "No; you won't frighten the lady." He replied: "No; I give you my word I will do you no hurt." Lady Browne gave him her purse, and was going to add her watch, but he said: "I am much obliged to you; I wish you good-night!" pulled off his hat, and rode away. "Well," said I, "Lady Browne, you will not be afraid of being robbed another time, for you see there is nothing in it." "Oh, but I am!" said she; "and now I am in terrors lest he should return, for I have given him a purse with only bad money, that I carry on purpose." "He certainly will not open it directly," said I; "and at worst he can only wait for us at our return; but I will send my servant back for a horse and a blunderbuss," which I did. . . . Luckily, the countess was born in England, the daughter of the former Czernichew, and she is in such terrors of highwaymen, that I shall be quit for a breakfast; so it is an ill highwayman that blows nobody good. In truth, it would be impossible in this region to amass a set of company for dinner to meet them. The Hertfords, Lady Holderness, and Lady Mary Cooke, did dine here on Thursday, but were armed as if going to Gibraltar; and Lady Cecilia Johnstone would not venture even from Petersham—for in the town of Richmond they rob even before dusk, to such perfection are all the arts brought. Who would have thought that the war with America would make it impossible to stir from one village to another? yet so it literally is. The colonies took off all our commodities, down to highwaymen."

Mr Hill lays down, as the result of his experience, that the chief causes of crime are—bad training and ignorance; drunkenness, and other kinds of profligacy; poverty; habits of violating the laws engendered by the creation of artificial offences; other measures of legislation interfering unnecessarily in private actions, or presenting examples of injustice; temptations to crime, caused by the probability either of entire escape or of subjection to an insufficient punishment. The causes, he adds, suggest the remedies. 'These consist chiefly, in my opinion, of good education and the general spread of knowledge; the cultivation of habits of forethought, sobriety, and frugality, with the control of the passions; the promotion of habits of industry and self-reliance, and the adoption of all other practicable means for raising every class of society beyond the sphere of destitution, and into that of comfort and moderate wealth; such a remodelling of our laws as shall bring the statute-book as nearly as possible into coincidence with the eternal principles of justice, so that while it is a code of municipal law, it may also serve as a manual of morality; and lastly, the adoption of such means for the apprehension, trial, and punishment of offenders as shall secure, as far as practicable, that every offence be followed by immediate detection and certain conviction, and that the criminal shall be placed in such a position as shall make him sincerely and deeply regret the wrong he has committed, and bring him to labour earnestly in the work of his

reformation, and in obtaining the means for making restitution to the person whom he has injured.'

It appears to us that Mr Hill omits to take notice of another source of crime, or at least fails to state it in a recognisable light. We allude to imperfections of mind, whether arising from natural or artificial causes. In a rude state of society, a coarse class of mind is appropriate, indeed useful, for refinement would be out of place where nothing but rough work is to be accomplished; but when society has succeeded in subduing the principal physical disadvantages of its position, the man without skill, ingenuity, and trained steadiness of purpose, is left behind. Hence, in the present day, the vast wreck of humanity drifted into the dingy nooks of large cities, where it festers and becomes a social nuisance. That education would tend to float off this miserable débris, partly pauper partly criminal, there can be little doubt, though much would depend on the nature of the instruction, as well as on other circumstances. One thing is certain. Just as society advances, so does there arise the greater necessity for a right education, in order to lessen as far as possible the accumulative power of this disturbing element; the existence of which, in all its hideous details, clearly shews that there has been grievous neglect somewhere. Whatever be the nature of the education determined on as a corrective, it appears to us, that unless the sending of children to school is rendered compulsory on parents, the streets of our large towns will continue to exhibit scenes of juvenile misery, and the fountain of crime will remain pretty much as it is. The law can hardly be too severe on those who, by neglecting their offspring, throw them on the world to live by begging or stealing. We quite accord with Mr Hill in thinking that parents ought to be made directly responsible for the injuries inflicted on society by criminal children, and for the cost of their maintenance under correction. With this rule in full operation, there would be comparatively little need of state patronage for education. It would stand on the usual principle of supply and demand, like other things required in our household and social economy.

Mr Hill proposes many improvements in the management of criminals, all directed more or less to their being discharged in a reformed state. As essential to this grand object, he recommends that the duration of confinement should be regulated, not by any scale of proportion to offences, but at the discretion of some judicial power, with a regard to what is required for the reformation of the offender. He considers the principles of prison-discipline to be in reality simple; and states that he has heard some of the most important of them announced by children. 'An intelligent child seven years old, who had been accustomed in her own family to see punishment administered with reluctance, and never beyond what was necessary to prevent a greater evil, but who had had no opportunity of hearing the subject of prison-discipline discussed, though, as she lived near a prison, she had probably sometimes turned her little mind towards it, was observed to be employed one day in transforming her dolls into the characters of a little drama, in which governors, matrons, and prisoners were the principal performers. The carpet was covered with buildings made of Lilliputian bricks, and inhabited by wooden prisoners. On being asked to explain all these arrangements, she said: "This part is where poor prisoners are received till the kind governor can judge whether they wish to do right; this, where he trusts some with more liberty; this, where prisoners can steal some things if they choose; and this (which is the governor's own house), where there are many valuable things left about, and where prisoners always stay some time before the governor asks other people to employ them, that he may be sure they have become honest.' This took place long before the subject had attracted much public attention. There can be little

room, we think, for doubt, that there are principles in human nature itself of which it is necessary to get hold, if we would succeed in correcting the guilty and preventing transgression. If, for instance, we could so arrange as to make it thoroughly clear to any culprit, that it was more for his interest to be innocent and self-supporting than an idler and malefactor, we might fairly expect to see him sin no more. The stimulus given to industry in prisons by holding out the certainty of some little gains to be ultimately at the disposal of the prisoner himself, supplies a strong hint on the subject.

The greatest difficulty, after all, is to get criminals replaced in decent society as persons willing and able to work for themselves. For want of trust in their reformation, the great majority are left no resource but to go back to their iniquitous courses. Perhaps this difficulty might be extenuated by some system of labour, both of an in-door and out-of-door character, which would insure liberated convicts at least the bare means of subsistence, until, by perseverance in voluntary well-doing, they gave assurance of their probity.

THE LODGINGS THAT WOULDNT SUIT.

My landlady was a little, spare, neat, clean-looking old woman, with the kind of superficial sharpness of eye that bespeaks a person whose mind has always moved within the same small circle. When, or at what age she began the business of letting furnished apartments, or whether she was born in it, and grew up of nature and necessity a landlady, I do not know; but there she was, as intimate with her house and everything that concerned it as a limpet is with its shell, and as ignorant, too, as that exclusive animal is of the outside world. Her connection with that world was of a peculiar kind. She never visited it but when driven by the force of circumstances, and then it was as a beleaguered garrison makes a sortie against the enemy. Her natural foes were the trades-people who dealt in anything she wanted, and the result of a conflict between them, if it involved but the fortunes of a half-penny, coloured her whole day. It was not frequently, however, that she was driven to this aggressive warfare, for my landlady was a great dealer at the door, and lived in a state of perpetual hostility with the vendors of sprats-O, and live soles.

Her house, or at least the parlour floor which I inhabited, bore a curious resemblance to herself, being a little, spare, neat, clean-looking old floor. It consisted of a sitting-room and bedroom in excellent preservation. What the age of the furniture may have been, it was impossible even to guess; but for all practical purposes, it was as good as new. There was no gloss on it—there never is in a lodging-house—but neither was there a single grain of dust. Though kept constantly clean, it had never been rubbed in its life; and that was the secret of its longevity. The carpet, though as whole as the rest, was not in other respects so fortunate. Its colour was so completely faded, that you could not tell what it had originally been; the pattern might have been a matter of endless controversy; and it exhibited a decided gangway from the door to the fireplace. Its dimensions might be thought scanty, for it did not cover the entire floor; but then, it must be considered, that this carpet was intended for the comfort of the lodgers' feet, not of those of the six cane-bottomed chairs ranged at wide intervals along the walls. On the mantle-piece there stood a lion of Derbyshire spar, and flanking him on each side a vase of stoneware; the background being formed by a long narrow horizontal mirror, divided into three compartments, with a black frame.

These apartments, for which I paid twelve shillings a week, were not particularly cheerful. They had, indeed, rather a cold solitary look; and sometimes in the morning at breakfast-time, I would fain even have

prolonged the ministering of the dirty maid-of-all-work, by asking questions. But Molly had doubtless been ordered not to speak to the lodgers, and therefore she answered curtly; and, slamming down, or whisking off the things, went her way. I had at length recourse to my landlady herself, and found her so much more communicative, that I suddenly conceived the wild idea of being able to select from her reminiscences the materials for a story—with which I had already resolved to delight the public, if I could only think of a plot. She was not at all disinclined to speak. Indeed I believe she would have made no scruple of telling me the history of all her lodgers, from the epoch when things began to settle down after the Norman Conquest; for it was to some such period I referred in my own mind the first appearance in her window of 'Lodgings to Let.' But somehow her lodgers had no history to relate. Her favourite hero was a gentleman, who every now and then brought her in news from the world that parliament was going to impose a tax upon furnished lodgings. This was a very exciting subject. So far as it went, she was so unscrupulous a democrat, that I began to be fearful of political consequences if we were overheard; indeed she did not hesitate to set the whole boiling of them at defiance, saying, in answer to my caution, that if she *was* took up in such a cause, she would soon let them know they had got the wrong sow by the ear!

But since my landlady had not a story, why not tell it? There was in it a young gentleman—and a young lady—and a mother—and a journey—and a legacy: all the requisite materials, in short—only not mixed. It would be something new—wouldn't it?—to give a love-story without a word of love, without an incident, and without a dénouement. Such was my landlady's no-story; and we will get it out of her.

'The lady and her daughter?' said she. 'Well, I don't know as there is anything particular to tell about them. They were respectable people, and excellent lodgers; their rent was as punctual in coming as the Saturday; they stayed fourteen months, and then they went away.'

'You have not mentioned their name?'

'Their name? Well, surely I must have known their name when I went after the reference; but as they knew nobody, and were known to nobody, I soon forgot it. We called the mother the Parlour, and the daughter the Young Lady; for you see, at that time there was no other young lady in the house. Their occupation? As for that, the mother marketed, and the daughter sewed, sitting in the chair at the window. Sometimes they walked, sometimes they read, sometimes they chatted. They did nothing else as I know of. They lived on their means, like other lodgers. All lodgers that stay fourteen months have means. You be so green, mister, you make me laugh sometimes!'

'I only wanted to know what was their station, how they lived, and—'

'Lived? oh, very respectable! A baked shoulder, we shall say, on the Sunday, with potatoes under it; Monday, cold; Tuesday, hashed; then, maybe, a pair of live sole for the Wednesday; Thursday, a dish of sassengers; Friday, sprats-O; and on Saturday, bread and butter in the forenoon, with a savoy or a polony at tea, made up the week—respectable. I know what a lady is, mister'—here the landlady fixed her eye upon me severely—"and them *were* ladies!"

'I have no doubt at all of it; and the young man was of course something like themselves?'

'He was like nothing but a mystery at the Coburg! I don't know as even he were a young man. He might just as well have been a middle-aged or an elderly man. There he sat at the parlour window opposite, with a book in his hand; but it was easy to see that it was our window he was reading, where the young lady was sitting, as I have told you, sewing in her chair. Day

after day, week after week, month after month, there was he looking, and looking, and looking; till the picture, I daresay, gathered upon his eye, and he could see little else in the world.'

'The young lady, I hope, returned the looks?'

'She, poor dear! Lor' love you, she was so short-sighted, that she could not tell whether it were a house or a hedge on the other side of the street. She did so laugh when I told her there was a young man a-looking at her! Then, when she turned her poor blind eyes in the direction, promiscuous-like, how he snatched away his head, as if he had been a-stealing something! It was a great misfortune for him that I had put my ear in, for all his long, lonely, quiet looks were now at an end. The young lady could not refrain from turning her head sometimes; and every time she did so, it gave him such a spasm! but when, at last, she got up, now and then, as if to look, full length, at something in the street, he fairly bolted off from the window. He could not stand *that* by no manner of means; little knowing, poor soul! that the eyes that had bewitched him did not carry half-way across the street.'

'That is excellent, mistress,' said I, for we were evidently coming to the pith of the story; 'but they no doubt met at last?'

'You shall hear—you shall hear,' replied my landlady; 'but I must first tell you, that one day, when he had been driven away out of sight by the full length of the young lady, I went out for a couple of chops to their dinners. Well, I was ever so long gone—for I was not to be done so easily out of a ha'penny a pound—but in coming home, as the young lady was still sewing away, I thought I would just pass by the other side before crossing over. And so, mister, while going by the house, I looked in at his window promiscuous—and there was a sight to see! He had retired to the other end of the room, where he was sitting with his back to the wall, his two elbows on a table before him, and his chin resting on his knuckles; and thus had he been staring for an hour right across the street, unseen and alone, with that young lady before him, like a vision of his own calling up. As for the meeting of the two'—

'Stop, mistress! Before you come to that, describe the young man.'

'The young man, if he were a young man, was a grave, steady, sedate, quiet individual, who might have been all ages from twenty-five to fifty. He wore black clothes and a white cravat; his hat was always as smooth as satin; his boots looked as if they had been French polished; his hair was brown, and combed smooth; his face gray; and he walked as if he was measuring the pavement with his steps. He left the house at one hour, and returned at another, neither a minute earlier nor later; and he indulged his poor heart with the young lady for the very same space of time every day.'

'And the heroine?'

'The what, mister?'

'The young lady—I beg pardon.'

'Oh, she was a nice sort of person, of two or three and twenty; light-hearted, but quiet in her manners; with a good complexion; pretty enough features, taking them altogether; and light-blue eyes, with the hazy appearance of short-sight.'

'Then, go on to the meeting!'

'I'm a-coming to it. It was one day that the Parlour and the Young Lady were out; and the live sole being fried beautiful, I was standing at the window, wondering what ever could be keeping them, and it just one. So, as the church-clock struck, I sees my young man, as usual, open his door and come out, and after a sweeping glance with the tail of his eye at our window, walk away down the street, so steady that one or two stepped out of his line, thinking he was a-measuring the pavement. Well, who should be coming, right in

his front, as if for the express purpose of meeting him, but our two ladies! I declare, it put me in mind of the appointment in the paper for the sake of Matrimony with somebody as has honourable intentions and means secrecy. The young man went on for awhile, as if he meant to cut right through between the mother and daughter; but his courage failed him at last, and he stopped at a window, and stared in at the bill, "Day-school for young Ladies," till they had passed some time. He then set off again, and disappeared without turning his head.'

'And is this the meeting, mistress?' said I with some indignation.

'To be sure it is,' said my landlady, 'and the only meeting they ever had; for that very day the Parlour received a letter from France, or Scotland, or some other place abroad, which made her give me a week's warning; and at the end of that time they went off, and I never saw them more.'

'And is this your story, mistress?' said I, getting into a downright rage.

'I told you from the first, mister,' replied my landlady, flaring up, 'that I had no story to tell; and if you don't choose to hear the end of it, you may do the other thing!'

'It is the end, my dear madam, that I am dying to hear. You have so interesting a way with you, that really—'

'Well, well. It was eight months before I heard anything about the ladies; but then I had a few lines from the Parlour, telling me that she had given up all thoughts of returning to London, as her daughter was now well married, and she was to live with her. I hardly knew at first what the letter was about, or who it was from; for the young man had gone too, soon after them—to one of the midland counties, I heard—and what with crosses of my own, and the tax that was agoing to be laid upon lodgings, I had forgotten all about them. By the end of a year, things were very dull with me. The parlours were empty, and the two-pair-back had gone off without paying his rent. One day I was sitting alone, for the girl was out, and thinking to myself what ever was to be done, when all of a sudden a knock came to the door, that made my heart leap to my mouth. Not that it was a loud, long knock, clatter, clatter; not a postman's knock, *ra-tatt*; nor a knock like yours, mister, *rât-ât-ât*: it was three moderate, leisurely strokes of the knocker, with precisely the same number of seconds between them; and I could have sworn the strokes were knocked by the young man, for many a time and oft had I heard them on the door on the other side of the way.'

'I hope to goodness you were right?' said I.

'Never was wrong in my life,' said my landlady, 'when I *felt* anything. Black coat, white cravat, smooth hat, glossy boots, brown hair, gray face—all were unchanged. He looked steadily at me for some seconds when I opened the door, and I was just going to ask him how he did—when at last he said: "Lodgings?"'

'"Yes, sir," said I, "please to step in;" and I shewed him into the parlour. He looked at everything minutely, but without moving from where he stood near the door: at the table, the chairs, the fireplace, the chimney-glass; I am sure he noticed that the tail of that lion was broken (but the husky tramped for it, I can tell you)—nothing escaped him; and at last he looked at the window, and at the chair the young lady used to sit in as she sewed; and then turning quietly round, he walked out.'

'What do you think of them?' asked I anxiously, as I followed him.

'"Wouldn't suit," said he; and so he went his way. I was a little put out, you may be sure!—'

'I'll take my corporal oath of that!' remarked I.

'But not so much as you think, mister,' said my

landlady ; 'for I could not help feeling sorry for him. But yet I own, when the very same thing occurred next year'—

'Next year !'

'On the very day, hour, minute, second : the same knock, the same look in my face, the same inspection of the room, the same gaze at the young lady's chair, and the same answer : "Wouldn't suit !" The next year—'

'My dear madam !—how long is that ago ?'

'Well—a matter of twenty years.'

I was glad it was no worse ; for a misgiving had come over me, and my imagination was losing itself in the distance of the past.

'The next year,' continued my landlady, 'and the next, and the next, and the next, were as like as may be. Sometimes the parlour was let ; but it was all one—he would see it, "as it might do for another time ;" and the lodgers being out, he did see it, and still it wouldn't suit. At last, I happened one year to be out myself, forgetting that it was the young man's day ; and my ! as the thought struck me when coming home, it gave me such a turn ! I felt as if I hadn't done right. I was by this time accustomed to the visit, you see, and always grew anxious when the time came. But it was of no consequence to him ; only he stared twice as long when the door was opened and he saw a strange face. But he went in all the same, looked at everything as usual—Wouldn't suit. At all these visits of inspection, his stay was of the same length to a minute ; and when he went away, I found—for I did watch him once—he walked straight to the coach-office.

'Well, mister, you may think, as years passed on, that I saw some difference in the young man's appearance. But he didn't grow a bit older. His hair changed, but his gray face was still like granite stone. His pace became slower ; but for that, he only came the sooner, so that he might have the same time to look, and get back to the coach at the proper moment. Then he seemed to tremble a little in his walk ; but he had now a cane to keep him stiff and upright ; and he still looked as if he was a-measuring the pavement, only taking more pains to it. I cannot think what it was that made me care so much about that old young man, for I never in my life exchanged more words with him than you have heard. But once, when the clock was fast, and he hadn't made his appearance at the hour, I sat quaking in my chair, and grew so nervous that, when at last the knock came, I started up with a scream. But this was after we had been well-nigh a score of years accustomed to each other. Earlier, I was sometimes cross ; that was when we had hardly any lodgers, and the parlour never would suit. But it was all one to him. He didn't mind me a pin—not even when, being in better humour, I once asked him to sit down. He just looked as usual—as if there was nobody in the world but himself. I was so nettled, that I thought of repeating the invitation, and pointing to the young lady's chair : but it was a bad thought, and I am glad now I kept it down.

'He grew more and more infirm ; and at last, when one year he came and went in a coach, although he would not make use of coachee's arm either in coming down or going up the steps, I had a sore heart and dim eyes looking after him. The next year, you may be sure, I was at my post as usual ; but when it came near the hour, I was so fidgety and nervous, that I could not sit down, but kept going from the parlour window to the door, and looking up at the clock. The clock struck—there was no knock. Poor old young man ! In ten minutes more, there was the postman's knock, and I took the letter he gave me into the parlour—slow and desolate-like. The girl was out ; we had hardly any lodgers ; things were very bad with me—I was sore cast down. But business is business ; and I opened the letter, which was no doubt about the

apartments, for I never got any other. This time, it was from a country attorney, telling me of that Death, and of a clause in the will, leaving a hundred pounds to me for my trouble in shewing the lodgings that wouldn't suit. Mister, I was took all of a heap ! The whole twenty years seemed to be upon my brain. The young man—the young lady—the long, long love-looks across the street—the meeting he couldn't stand, that was like Matrimony in the papers—the visits to the parlour, where she had lived, and sat, and never saw him—the gray face—the sinking limbs—the whitening hair—the empty lodgings—the hundred pounds ! I was alone in the house ; I felt alone in the world ; and straightway I throws the letter upon the table, plumps me down in a chair, and burst out a-crying and sobbing.'

Here my landlady stopped ; and here ends a tale that wants, methinks, only incident, plot, character, colouring, beginning, a middle, and an end, to be a very good one. But all these it receives from the reader, who is acquainted with the inner life of that old young man, and is able, if he chose, to write his history in volumes ; and whose memory brings before him some unconscious image, which gave a tone and direction to the thoughts of years, and supplied a Mecca of the heart for his meditative visits, without affecting in any sensible degree the cold calm look, and the measured step with which he paced through the cares and business of the world.

FRIENDLY SOCIETIES.

SOME alarming facts have recently transpired respecting Friendly Societies, and we consider it our duty to make them known to the parties more immediately interested.

It must be generally understood that the principle of life-insurance depends on a correct calculation of the chances of ill-health and death, and that payments require to be paid corresponding to those chances. Now, it is notorious that in the getting up and conducting of Friendly Societies, too little attention has been paid to this important particular ; and the consequence is, that a time comes when the funds of the society are exhausted, leaving nothing whatever to the longest survivors. We are old enough to remember the time when, in our own native town—in the Midland Counties of England—there were not a few small Friendly Societies, each independent of the rest, known as Sick-clubs, &c., and already, we believe, every one of them has ceased to exist. Whether small or large, the sudden extinction of one of these societies is to each individual member a terrible blow. If the member be a young man, or one even in the prime of life, he may not feel it so much ; but it is quite otherwise with an old man verging towards the tomb. He may have been a member ever since the formation of the society ; he may have never missed his payments ; he may never yet have found, or acknowledged, the necessity of drawing a farthing from its funds. Perhaps he has stinted himself and his family of food or other necessities, gone with a threadbare coat, or deprived himself of his Sunday's dinner, and every little luxury, in order that he might invariably pay his due contribution to the society. That society may have been his idol, his oracle. He may have prided himself more on being an old member of it, than on any other earthly thing. He may have recommended it to his neighbours and fellow-workmen year after year, and may have induced many to become members like himself—all through his profound faith in its stability, and his generous and manly desire to make others as well as himself participants in its presumed advantages. Well, one morning he awakes, and his club is dissolved ! The cherished hope of his life is at one rude stroke annihilated. The source whence

he thought himself sure of relief in sickness, or some small yet most important weekly aid in his aged decrepitude, is for ever extinct.

Mr Charles Hardwick has delivered a lecture on the progress, prospects, utility, and especially the precarious financial condition of Friendly Societies. This lecture was delivered some time ago in London, Manchester, Bolton, and other places, and was so well received, and excited so much interest, that he was requested to deliver it in various districts, but he wisely preferred presenting it to the public in a printed form. Three editions have been rapidly called for, and the latest is now before us.* We propose to give our readers some idea of the spirit of this remarkable brochure, and some examples of the startling revelations it contains. Mr Hardwick is evidently a man who thoroughly understands the subject; indeed he is a past provincial grand-master, and member of the board of directors of the Independent Order of Odd Fellows, Manchester Unity, the most powerful and extensive of all the unities or affiliated societies. He is at present connected with the Equitable Provident Institution.

Of the names of the various kinds of Friendly Societies, and the probable number of their members, it is not necessary to say anything here. Our only object is to speak of their financial condition. 'On this point,' proceeds Mr Hardwick, 'I am desirous of clearly shewing, from past experience, that a vast majority of the Friendly Societies now in existence—enrolled and unenrolled, certified and uncertified—are, from the inadequacy of their rates, and other causes, not in a position to meet their future engagements, and that speedy reform must take place, or their redemption will become an impracticability, for every year of error immensely increases the difficulty and expense of adjustment. It is impossible that I can analyse the exact situation of each individual society; I will, therefore, confine my observations to the facts furnished by the Manchester Unity. . . . But I wish most particularly to be understood, that I do not, on this account, desire it to be inferred that the Manchester Unity is most in need of improvement.' He then explains that the Manchester Unity—of which, be it remembered, he himself is, or very recently was, a leading member and manager—has, within the last ten years, considerably increased the rate of contribution, and lessened the expenditure, besides effecting sundry very valuable and important alterations and improvements, such as separating the incidental fund from the sick and burial fund, and spending less in mere glaring shows. Nevertheless, he emphatically adds, that, as an honest man, he 'is compelled to acknowledge that, according to the data furnished by its own experience, the great bulk of this important society will, in a few years, be unable to meet in full the legitimate claims of its members, unless very important changes in its financial constitution be speedily effected.'

Authentic returns of the Preston district of the Manchester Unity were examined by Mr Hardwick, and he hints that he believes many other districts are in a far worse condition. The Preston district, in 1850, numbered 1977 members, seventy and six-tenths per cent. of whom were married. Their average age was about thirty-five years; but as the average age will not give the average sickness, on account of the greater rapidity of the increase during the latter portion of life, I classed them under quinquennial, or five-yearly periods, from which, assisted by Mr H. Ratcliffe, the actuary, I calculated the liabilities according to the experience of the Manchester Unity itself. The reserved fund amounted to nearly £7000, averaging between £3 and £4 per member. The present value of their total liability is about £60,000; while that of their assets, future

subscriptions, and reserved fund included, is little more than £36,000, or very nearly £24,000 less than the liability. All the advantages gained by the members who have previously paid for some time into the district, and afterwards left it, are included, inasmuch as the reserved fund has been increased by the sum so paid, and the members who paid it having left, of course are not included in the liabilities.

Now this society, which is apparently one of the most secure and flourishing, is only one among hundreds equally insecure, or yet more burdened by liabilities. Mr Neison, who is considered one of the very highest authorities on the subject, states that 'societies may continue, for thirty or forty years, to meet their engagements, under certain circumstances, and still eventually fail.' During the last quarter of a century, several thousands of societies have failed; and let the following example—a solitary one, which has innumerable actual parallels—indicate the probability of how many thousands more will fail. We give it in Mr Hardwick's own words: 'I will instance the lodge to which I belong. It is generally considered a prosperous one. In 1850, it numbered 195 members—their average age was thirty-three years and three-tenths, and this was still increasing each year. The proportion of married men was below the average of the district, being only sixty-eight and two-tenths per cent. Yet from Mr Ratcliffe's calculation, from the average experience of the city districts of the Manchester Unity, this fund could only pay 7s. 1d. in the pound on its liabilities. That is to say, the lodge ought to have been in possession of upwards of £2400 to enable it, with the existing rate of contribution, to meet the whole of the future liabilities of the present subscribers. Those clubs with older members, and a proportionately less reserved fund, may imagine the precarious position in which they stand.'

The main causes why Friendly Societies are generally in such a very precarious state are these: too low a rate of members' subscriptions; erroneously-calculated tables; excessive working expenses, in the shape of too large and too highly-paid a staff of officials; foolish expenditure in feasting, shows, gawgaws, and trumpery paraphernalia, &c. The chief error of all, however, consists in fixing the subscriptions at too small a sum. Many Odd Fellows' Lodges require only an entrance fee of £2, and a yearly payment of 17s. 4d., in order to insure 10s. weekly in sickness through life, £10 at death, and £5 on the death of a member's wife; while, according to Mr Neison, to afford these rates, members entering at the age of thirty-two, ought to pay nearly £2 yearly. Many societies require even smaller sums from their members than the Odd Fellows above alluded to. Sooner or later, insolvency must be their portion. 'According to the Manchester Unity tables, to insure the sum of 10s. per week during sickness till the age of seventy, and afterwards an annuity of 2s. 6d. per week, in lieu of sick-pay; £10 at the death of a member, and nothing on the death of a member's wife, a party entering at thirty-five years of age, ought to pay, without initiation-money, the annual sum of £1, 13s. 10d. Yet for an entrance-fee of £4, 10s., and 17s. 4d. per year, the Preston district promises £10 at the death of a member, and £7 on the death of a member's wife; 10s. per week in sickness, should it continue a full year; 5s. per week, should the inability to follow the usual employment continue another year; and 2s. 6d. per week for ever afterwards.'

Mr Neison, Mr Ansell, and Mr Ratcliffe, have all published valuable calculations on the average amount of sickness; and although they vary slightly, yet they very distinctly agree in shewing that all, or nearly all the Friendly Societies, fail to make sufficient allowance in their calculations for the great increase of sickness which old age invariably brings in its train. Mr Neison reckons the total average amount of sickness from

* *Friendly Societies.* By Charles Hardwick. Published by Houlston & Stoneman. The People's Edition.

twenty to sixty, to be sixty weeks, three days, eleven hours; and between sixty and seventy, to be seventy-seven weeks, two days, two hours. Some have supposed that the amount of sickness in Scotch societies is much less than in the English; but it is now ascertained, that the reason why the Scotch tables apparently infer a less amount of average sickness, is because 'the members of the Scotch clubs were not in the habit of claiming the sick-allowance, unless they happened to be in indifferent circumstances at the time of their inability to follow their employment.' But the tables referred to date back so far as 1820; and whether the clubs present similar features now, we are not aware.

The following candid remarks of Mr Hardwick are so good, that we must not omit to quote them:—'It is, however, but just to the members of the old Friendly Societies, after the errors into which they have fallen have been pointed out, in order to the adoption of means for their improvement, that I should give them full credit for the whole of the good they have effected. This, unfortunately, has been neglected by many who have thought proper to denounce their errors and imperfections. The cause of these errors has not been want of integrity, but the absence of knowledge. The honest working-man is, of course, offended when he sees or hears himself and friends classed amongst the fools, or perhaps the knaves, by parties, some of whose statements he knows to be false, and whose motives he has perhaps some little show of reason to suspect. But the great mischief is, that when uneducated men discover that their case is made out to be worse than they know it really to be, they at once denounce the whole of the assertions of the party as false and slanderous; and thus the communication of much information, which might really have been well worthy of their serious attention, is productive of no beneficial result, but engenders perhaps fierce and bigoted opposition.'

Every one who has an interest, either direct or indirect, in any description of Friendly Society, should by all means procure and study Mr Hardwick's lecture. We sincerely believe it to be written in a right spirit, with an honest desire to uplift a warning voice to the existing societies, and to point out the rocks on which so many of them have already split, and on which it is very greatly to be feared that still more of them will hereafter be wrecked. Benefit societies which are not based on sure statistics of health and sickness among an average number of individuals, are mere lotteries, or at anyrate wild speculations, and their failure, sooner or later, is a matter of absolute certainty. As a general rule, the smaller the society, the greater its working expenses must be in proportion to the number of members, and the higher ought the annual payments to be, in order to meet the inevitable outlay. Until a thorough reform is instituted in the constitutions of existing societies, we do not see what possible guarantee an industrious man has that he is not building his house on the sand when he enters them. One would naturally presume that the oldest existing societies—those which have stood the test of forty or fifty years, and have hitherto consistently sustained their credit, and met every call upon them—are the safest; but nevertheless, we would urgently advise all who contemplate becoming members, to make some previous inquiry into their rules, and test these rules by the data and opinions furnished by eminent actuaries. We do not profess to have any intimate personal knowledge of the practical working of Friendly Societies; and even if we did, we should shrink from the responsibility of giving our working friends advice to join any particular society in preference to another. All we say is, beware of rash confidence in *any* society, either single or amalgamated. We also think it would be well if the legislature set afoot some systematic inquiry into the condition of the great mass of Friendly Societies, and laid down some simple,

easily-understood tests, whereby the security of any society, either established or projected, might be judged of with a degree of certainty by the intending member. Surely the interests at stake are enough to justify, and indeed call for, such a step on the part of government.

MANKIND, FROM A RAILWAY BAR-MAID'S POINT OF VIEW.

MANKIND is composed of great herds of rough-looking persons, who occasionally rush with frightful impetuosity into our refreshment-rooms, calling for cups of coffee, and hot brandy and water, which they tumble into themselves scalding, and pay for in furious haste; after which they rush out again, without exchanging a civil word with anybody. Mankind, even of the first class, are dressed queerly in pea-coats, paletots, cloaks, and caps, with no sort of attention to elegance. They indulge much in comforters, and green and red handkerchiefs, and sometimes little is seen of their visages beyond the mouth and the point of the nose. While they stand at the bar eating or drinking, they look much like a set of wild beasts in a menagerie, taking huge bites and monstrous gulps, and often glaring wildly askance at each other, as if each dreaded that his neighbour would rob him of what he was devouring. It is a very unamiable sight, and has given me a very mean opinion of mankind. They appear to me a set of beings devoid of courtesy and refinement. None of them ever takes off hat or cap when eating, and not one of even those whom I suppose to be clergymen, ever says grace before the meat which I hand him. A soup or a sandwich is no better in this respect than a brandy and water. When a lady comes in amongst these rude ungracious animals, unless she has a husband or other friend to take some care of her, she is left to forage for herself; and I have seen some forlorn examples of the sex come very poorly off, while gentlemen were helping themselves to veal and ham pies, and slices of the cold round. I don't know any difference on mankind for a great number of years. They are just the same muffled-up, confused-looking, munching, glaring, bolting crew, as when I first became acquainted with them at the station. They are not conversable creatures. They seem to have no idea of using the mouth and tongue for any purpose but that of eating. They can only ask for the things they wish to eat or drink, and what they have to pay for them. Now and then, I hear some one making a remark to another, but it seldom goes beyond such subjects as the coldness of the night; and this, by a curious coincidence, I always find to be alluded to just before I am asked for a tumbler of punch, as if there were a necessary connection between the two ideas. Sometimes a gentleman, when the bell suddenly rings for seats, and he only begun to his cup of coffee and biscuit, will allow a naughty expression to escape him. Beyond this, mankind are a taciturn, stupid set; for though I hear of speeches, and lectures, and conversaziones, I never hear or am present at any, and I can hardly believe that such things exist.

I am, indeed, rather at a loss to understand how all those things that one hears of in the newspapers come about. We are told there of statesmen who conduct public affairs, of soldiers who fight gallantly for their country, of great poets and novelists who charm their fellow-creatures, and of philosophers and divines who instruct them. A few will lay their heads together, and raise a Crystal Palace. Some will combine, and throw a tubular bridge across a strait of the sea. These things are a complete mystery to me, for I see nothing of mankind but coarse eating and drinking, and most undignified runnings off when the bell rings. There must surely be another mankind who do all the fine things.

One detestable thing about the mankind that comes

under my observation, is their gluttony. Every two or three hours they rush in, demanding new refreshments, and eating them with as much voracity as if they had not seen victuals for a week. They eat eight times a day on our line, and the last train is always the hungriest, besides taking the most drink. It is a perfect weariness to me, this constant feed—feed—feeding. What with the quantity they eat, and what with the haste of the eating, we must send out hundreds of indigestions from our rooms every day.

On account of these shocking habits on the part of mankind, I have for some time past entertained a great contempt for them, insomuch, that I almost wish to see them scald themselves with my cups of tea, and choke upon my pies. For me to think of marrying any specimen of so coarse a crew, is entirely out of the question; so it is quite as well that Tom Collard, the guard, left me for Betsy last summer, and that, as yet, no other follower has come forward. It will be best for them all to keep their distance—so assures them their obedient humble servant,

SOPHIA TANKARD.

THE LIBERIAN BLACKSMITH.

WAS there ever a person like Mrs Stowe's Uncle Tom in actual existence? What we want to know is, whether an individual born in slavery, and bred under the degrading and stupefying influences of that condition, could possibly be so admirable in character, so meek and yet so firm, so amiable, so conscientious, and so intelligently pious as that wonderful hero of romance is represented to have been. Some eminent critics have boldly asserted, that the character is an impossible one. Even Mrs Stowe herself seems to have been sensible of the objection, and willing to admit its truth; for she declares, or, what amounts to the same thing, makes Arthur St Clair affirm, that a slave like Uncle Tom is a 'moral miracle.' Such an admission might lead one to believe, that the lady's genius is more powerful than her reasoning faculty. It overmasters her; and, like a prophetess of old, she utters higher truths than she can fully comprehend. But the reader shall judge.

Suppose, for a moment, that Uncle Tom had been depicted as not only excellent in every moral quality, but also as a man of strong intellect and great learning; suppose that he had been represented as acquiring, by his unaided exertions, not only the common elements of education, but a knowledge of Latin and Greek, and even some acquaintance with Hebrew, and as exciting, by his theological disquisitions, the admiration of a large assembly of clergymen: here would have been an intellectual prodigy, combined with the 'moral miracle.' Mrs Stowe would evidently not have ventured upon such a delineation; and if she had, the critics would unanimously have scouted it as outraging the utmost bounds of the natural and probable. A writer of fiction must keep within these bounds, and the lady has probably gone as far as the limits of art would allow her. But truth is privileged, and acknowledges no such artistic restrictions. It is quite true, if human testimony is to be believed, that such a moral and intellectual prodigy as has just been described did exist, at no great distance from the scene of Uncle Tom's imaginary adventures and sufferings. The particulars of this remarkable case, as they have come to our knowledge, may be briefly told.

About six years ago, a narrative appeared in some American journals which excited a good deal of interest. It was an account of 'a learned black blacksmith,' or, in other words, of a negro slave, who, while working as a mechanic, had managed first to learn to read and write; then to acquire a considerable proficiency in the classical tongues; and finally, to commence the study of Hebrew. Indeed, as usually happens in such cases, his attainments were at first exaggerated, and he was

represented as having made himself acquainted with no less than seven languages, and as thus being hardly inferior in learning to Elihu Burritt himself. The story in this form attracted the attention of some benevolent persons. Inquiries were made; and the simple truth, divested of all embellishment, was found to be sufficiently extraordinary to awaken a strong feeling in his favour, and to lead to efforts which resulted in his liberation. In the year 1846, a Presbyterian minister, belonging to the synod of Alabama, sent to a religious newspaper of New Orleans a short biography of this remarkable slave. From this and other sources, we learn that Ellis, or, as he subsequently wrote his name, Harrison W. Ellis, was born in Pittsylvania County, in the state of Virginia. In early life, he 'was removed' from that place to Tennessee; but whether in this removal he accompanied his old master, or was sold to another, is not stated. At the age of nine years, he formed the purpose of learning to read, principally in order that he might be able to peruse the Bible. He had observed that ministers, in preaching, always read from the Bible, and spoke of it as being the Word of God; and the expression, so customary as to pass without notice from ordinary hearers, made a strong impression upon his mind. It would be interesting to learn the exact methods by which he succeeded in accomplishing his purpose; but all his biographer tells us is, that in despite of numerous obstacles, such as would have deterred almost any one else, he succeeded in learning to read, and afterwards to write. When he was twenty-five years old, another removal took place. This time, he was transferred to the state of Alabama. He was still a slave, labouring at the trade of a blacksmith, of course for his master's benefit. A thirst for knowledge had been awakened in his mind; and after reading a good many books, principally on religious subjects, he was led to undertake the study of the Latin language. He had no regular instruction, but received, it is stated, 'some little assistance from one person and another, as a casual opportunity afforded it.'

This statement, it may be observed, does not altogether harmonise with the commonly received opinion, that the slaves in America are purposely kept in gross ignorance, and that to teach one to read is treated as a criminal offence. The fact is, that such prohibitory and penal laws really exist, and that a school for the instruction of slaves would not be tolerated; but the efforts of individual slaves to acquire instruction, either from one another or from good-natured whites, are rarely if ever interfered with. The difficulties which opposed Ellis's pursuit of knowledge do not seem to have been greater than a poor labourer would have had to encounter in most parts of Europe during the last century. What excites our surprise in the case of Ellis, is not the extent of his acquirements, or the magnitude of the obstacles which he had to overcome, but that a negro, and a slave, should thus devote himself earnestly to intellectual pursuits. The negro race is regarded by some as naturally deficient in mental capacity, and a slave has apparently no motive for attempting to improve his mind. It does not appear that Ellis commenced his studies with any expectation that they would procure him his freedom, or in any way ameliorate his circumstances. He studied, partly that he might better comprehend his Bible, and partly for the mere love of learning. Having acquired some knowledge of Latin, he afterwards undertook the study of Greek, and subsequently of Hebrew. In the latter, however, he made very little progress, owing to the want of books—a difficulty, indeed, which had retarded his progress throughout his studies. 'It cannot be said,' observes the clergyman who wrote of him in 1846, 'that he is a finished scholar in either the Latin or Greek languages. He has, however, acquired such a knowledge of both, as

to be able, without any assistance, to prosecute his studies in them to any length he may wish. His acquaintance with his own tongue is such as to enable him to speak and write it with as much propriety as is common among educated men. While he has read and studied some authors on natural science, moral philosophy, and the like, his reading has been confined for the most part to religious books. Dwight, Dick, and Boston, are the theological writers with whom he is most familiar.'

In what way the abilities and acquirements of this remarkable slave first became known, does not appear. It may be presumed, however, that some Presbyterian minister was induced to take an interest in him, and to bring his case under the notice of the ruling bodies of that church, as it appears that in the year already mentioned the synods of Alabama and Mississippi combined to purchase his freedom and that of his family, with the view of sending them to Africa under the care of the American Board of Missions. It was intended that Ellis should be ordained as a missionary, and with this view he was introduced at a meeting of the presbytery of Tuscaloosa as a candidate for clerical orders. The impression he made is thus recorded by the writer who has been already quoted, and who then apparently saw him for the first time:—'I believe I utter the sentiments of the whole presbytery, and of the large assembly present at his examination, when I say, that for precision on the details of religious experience—for sober, rational views of what constitutes a call to the ministry—for sound, consistent, scriptural views of the leading doctrines of the Gospel, few candidates for the office have been known to equal him. The effect of his statements was greatly increased by the fact, that he seemed to be presenting rather the results of his own reflections than what he had learned from the investigations of others. On many points, there was a striking originality in his mode of exhibiting his sentiments. He also read a sermon of his own composition, of which some of the members thought so highly, that they proposed that the presbytery should order its publication. It certainly looked and sounded very strange—it was almost incredible—to see and hear one who had been all his life a slave, with none but the ordinary privileges of a slave, reading a production so correct in language, so forcible in style, so logical in argument, and abounding with quotations from the Bible so intelligently and pertinently applied.' So well satisfied was the presbytery of his fitness for the office, that arrangements were immediately made to ordain him as a missionary during the next session of the synod.

Ellis was at that time between thirty and forty years of age. He is described as of pure negro parentage, and quite black: his grandfather, indeed, was a native of Africa. His wife was about the same age, and could read. They had two children, a son and daughter. The former, a sprightly lad, seventeen years old, could not only read and write, but had made some progress in the study of arithmetic, geography, and other branches of school learning. The daughter, then eleven years of age, had just commenced learning to read. It must be borne in mind, that the only opportunities which the children could have had for receiving instruction, were such as occurred in the casual intervals of their own and their father's labour.

It appears that the benevolent intentions of the two synods were promptly carried into effect. In looking through a series of the publications of the American Colonisation Society, we are enabled to trace the results. In March 1847, a schooner arrived at Liberia from New Orleans with a party of emigrants for the colony. A letter from an American physician, then residing in Liberia as the agent of the United States government, gives an account of the arrival of these

emigrants, and thus notices the one in whom we are chiefly interested:—'I am pleased with the manners and character of Mr Ellis, "the learned black blacksmith," who came out in the schooner, and who, with his wife and two children, was liberated from slavery by the Presbyterian synods of Alabama and Mississippi, at an expense of 2500 dollars. Although the accounts which have been published respecting his proficiency as a scholar, especially as a linguist, may have been exaggerated, yet I think he is an extraordinary man; and I hope his example and influence may be highly beneficial in this country.'

In the *African Repository* for 1848, there appears a brief letter from Mr Ellis himself, addressed to one of his clerical friends in Alabama. He was then in excellent spirits, well pleased with the colony, and content with his own prospects. A few months after his arrival in Liberia, the pulpit of one of the Presbyterian churches in Monrovia became vacant, and Mr Ellis was installed pastor of the church. Five members, he writes, had since been added to the church, one of whom was his own son. A year later, we find, by a paragraph in the same publication, that, besides performing the duties of his pastoral charge, Mr Ellis had commenced his missionary labours among the natives. 'He is studying,' we are here told, 'the language of two wild tribes, in order to be able to preach to them in their own tongue. He says, that the Mandingoes claim him for their countryman, because his grandfather was born in Africa. This tribe are Mohammedans; and some of their priests, he says, are intelligent, being capable of reading Hebrew when written in the Arabic character.' Two years later, there appears a somewhat long letter from Mr Ellis, giving some interesting information concerning Liberia, in answer to a letter of inquiry from a gentleman in Alabama, and at the same time affording us a good insight into the character of the writer, who certainly bears a strong moral resemblance to Uncle Tom. For instance, supposing the latter to have obtained an education, and afterwards to have settled in Liberia, would he have answered an inquiry about 'the general capacity of Liberian children' in terms very different from those of the following intelligent and quaintly-expressed reply?—'The children of Liberia are exactly like the white children in America; and as this part of our community have the best opportunity to equal the corresponding part in America, their equality can be better seen. And as remarkable as this branch of society is [that is, white children in America], old persons [slaves] had not the opportunity of seeing much of it where we came from, so that many think our children have more penetrating minds than those of America. This supposition arose out of the above-mentioned circumstance; but it is not well founded. The fact is, if there be any difference, it is in this—perhaps the children in Liberia learn as fast, if not faster, for the first few years; but it may be that the young Americans continue their mental improvement the longest. I think—that though there may be circumstances by which we shall be able, after awhile, to account better for the facts just alluded to—I think it most probable, that "the lambs stop eating, because the shepherds get out of corn;" the children stop learning, when their teacher cannot teach them any further. But,' he adds, alluding to the recent establishment of some good schools in Liberia, 'this sad state of things does not exist at present.'

There is another passage in the letter which deserves to be quoted, as it strikingly evinces the truth of Mrs Stow's representation of character. Uncle Tom's meek endurance of all the wrongs of slavery, his refusal to make use of his 'pass' for the purpose of escaping, and the excuses which he finds for his master's hard treatment of him, have been censured by critics as indicating a state of feeling altogether unnatural and improbable in a slave. Now, our learned blacksmith

had been a slave till he was past thirty years of age; he had apparently been twice sold; he had certainly had to give nearly all his earnings to his master, and to submit entirely to his master's will: yet he 'strode,' as he himself said, 'to make himself agreeable and happy' in this condition, and he counselled all his brethren to submission.

At this time, Mr Ellis had accepted a new responsibility, probably more in compliance with the wishes of others, than in accordance with his own views. A high school, supported by the Presbyterian Board of Missions in New York, had been established at Monrovia, and Mr Ellis was appointed the master of it. As might have been expected, the arrangement proved to be an injudicious one. Experience has shewn that a person entirely self-taught, however great his abilities and his learning, is rarely if ever qualified for the office of a teacher. The art of instruction, like other arts, must be acquired by an apprenticeship. The self-taught man, with his mind full of scientific truths and classical erudition, finds himself ignorant of numerous important methods and essential details which he could have acquired in any well-conducted village-school. Hence we are not surprised to learn, from a recent report on the state of education in Liberia, that the high school had been less successful than its patrons expected. 'The uncommon talents and industry of its principal, the Rev. Mr Ellis, manifested in acquiring a knowledge of the Latin, Greek, and Hebrew languages while a slave,' adds this report, 'do not adequately supply the place of that thorough and careful training in the rudiments, which every teacher needs, in order to teach others to the best advantage.' Under these circumstances, the proper course was taken: a new principal—a graduate of an American theological seminary—was appointed to the school, and Mr Ellis was left free to pursue the pastoral and missionary labours for which he was best qualified.

Such is the sum of our information concerning this learned, sensible, and pious negro slave. The story is a suggestive one in various ways, and might give occasion for many reflections on slavery and its effects, on African civilisation, distinctions of race, and so forth. We choose, however, to leave it simply as a *pièce justificative*—as a French historian would say—of the now world-famous American romance; merely observing, that if Mrs Stowe's fiction is strange, the plain truth maintains its superiority, as usual, by being stranger still.

CHAPTER ON BEARS.

ALTHOUGH Master Slender confessed that to see Sackerson loose was 'meat and drink' to him, he had still the candour to admit, special tastes and predilections apart, that bears were, after all, 'very ill-favoured, tough things,' and that, accordingly, it is not surprising 'women cannot abide 'em.' In Master Slender's day, and indeed both before and after it, the popular mind was, moreover, possessed of very singular notions respecting Bruin and his brood: those who knew him best, and could claim him as a fellow-countryman, holding him in high respect and veneration—those who had their abode in regions in which he figured only as an exotic, an imported curiosity, regarding him with awe and something like terror, and persuaded he was not altogether 'canny,' but, in truth, a very 'awesome' and mysterious beast.

Pliny affirms the bear's skull to be the tenderest, and the parrot's the hardest known to the osteologist; and that very sagacious and trustworthy Scandinavian bishop, well known to us as Olaus Magnus, also acknowledges that 'bears have a most weak head.' Be this as it may, we are certified by the authority of the latter, that, in former times, bears were rendered

contributory to the spread of education amongst the inhabitants of the far north; and that, if not exactly learned themselves—and it would not be quite safe to aver even this—they were at least the cause of learning in others. Let Olaus explain this in the congenial language of his old translator:—

'The Russians and Lithuanians are more near to the Swedes and Goths on the eastern parts, and these hold it a singular delight to have always the most comely beasts bred up tame with them, and made obedient to their commands in all things. Therefore to do this the sooner, they keep them in caves, or tyed with chains, chiefly bears newly taken in the woods, and half starve them; and they appoint one or two masters, cloathed the one like the other, to carry victuals to them, that they may be accustomed to play with them, and handle them when they are loose. Also they play on pipes sweetly, and with this they are much taken: and thus they use them to sport and dance; and then when the pipes sound differently, they are taught to lift up their legs as by a more sharp sign to end the dance with, that they may go on their hinder-feet, with a cap on their fore-feet, held out to the women and maids and others that saw them dance, and ask a reward for their dancing; and if they give not freely, they will murmur as they are directed by their master, and will nod their heads, as desiring them to give more money; so the master of these beasts that cannot speak the language of other countries, will get good gain by his dumb beast. Nor doth this seem to be done only because that these should live by this small gain, for the bear-herds that lead their bears are at least ten or twelve lusty men, and in their company sometimes there go noblemen's sons, that they may learn the fashions, manners, and distancies of places, the military arts, and concord of princes, by these merry pastimes. But since they were found in Germany to spoil travellers, and to cast them to their bears to eat, most strict laws are made against them.'

We discover in this narration the source and origin of Russian diplomacy, and we come to understand how the bear has—if one had the wit to see it—in some degree a political importance. Indeed, we cannot but appreciate his importance in this respect, when we remember, that two of the Roman emperors—Maximilian and Valentinian—as hath been writ in authentic history, kept each of them his bear, and employed him in the honourable task of devouring such as ventured in any way to contravene the imperial will and pleasure. These bears, whose dutiful obedience to their masters' commands, in rending and devouring contumacious subjects, the emperors were daily in the habit of witnessing, had severally for name, Mica Aurea and Innocentia. Romodanofsky, the coarse and vulgar favourite of Peter the Great, had also a pet bear, a gigantic, ill-looking brute, which he kept in his palace, and which was accustomed to give to every visitor a glass of brandy, qualified by a strong dose of pungent pepper. If the visitor tossed off the nauseous compound, all was well enough; but if his gorge should rise at the villainous mixture, and he decline it, the hospitable bear would angrily forthwith tear his clothes from off his back. Thus did Bruin serve his master in quality of a sort of political touchstone or Ithuriel's spear, and enable him to know on whose subserviency and regard he might confidently rely, and to what extent he might safely count on the deference and support of the various courtiers who thronged to his presence. The bear, besides, is of a persevering, energetic character. Thus the ranger in the *Tour on the Prairies* says, that 'the bear is the knowingist varmint for finding out a bee-hive in the world. They'll gnaw for a whole day at the trunk until they get in their paws, and then they'll haul out the honey, bees

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and all.' A very eminent philosopher, at the beginning of the seventeenth century, took a still more serious view of the matter, for, as we are assured by our great English rhymster—

Cardan believed great states depend
Upon the tip o' th' Bear's tail's end,
That, as she whisked it t'wards the sun,
Strowed mighty empires up and down—
Which others say must needs be false,
Because your true bears have no tails.

The bear, in short, was considered an extraordinary quadruped altogether, and endowed with far higher mental capacity than were quadrupeds generally. There is amongst the Additional Manuscripts in the British Museum, a beautifully illuminated book, of Flemish origin, in which one is depicted as dancing and at the same time playing the bagpipes.

M. de la Motraye, in his interesting and instructive travels, gives us this further singular information respecting the bear. At Oza, a large Polish village, two miles from Grodno, he writes:—"I was assured that the bears of that forest, though they are very numerous, are so far from doing any harm to human creatures, that, on the contrary, the she-bears have often reared infants exposed by unnatural mothers; that, in King Cassimer's reign, some huntsmen had taken two of those infants alive, which, although they went on all-fours, could not run so fast as the bears which nourished them; they roared in the same manner, and fled from the sight of men as they did; the one, by his growth, was computed to be eleven or twelve years old, and the other nine or ten. It was a great while before they could be brought to eat any cooked viands or bread, to talk, or walk on their feet, as other men do; particularly the one who was kept at court; and the other being put to a convent at Warshow, there learned a few Polish words, but never to that perfection as to understand or be understood well. Their bodies were very hairy, their skin tawny, and so hardened that they could bear cold weather better than hot; in a word, they had nothing to distinguish them from beasts but their shape and figure. However, as it was believed they were human creatures, they were baptised. The king made a present of that which had been kept sometime at court to the vice-chamberlain of Posmania, who employed him in his kitchen; but he could not be reconciled to the heat thereof, nor weaned from his brutal customs. He often took a ramble into the forest, to visit his friends and brethren, the bears, which used him with all the tenderness imaginable; and he always brought home some wild-fruit, which he used to eat with more pleasure than anything the kitchen afforded. All this has many points of resemblance to the well-authenticated accounts of children suckled by wolves in India, the details of which we have already laid before our readers.* Another peculiarity of the animal is thus described by Butler:—

A bear's a savage beast, of all
Most ugly and unnatural,
Whelped without form, until the dam
Hath licked it into shape and frame.

On this Pliny the naturalist has most learnedly disengaged. As a consequence, he informs us, of the necessity for licking the cubs into a proper ursine shape and fashion, the male bear is not seen for forty days, nor the female for four months after birth. He further describes the artificial dens which the bears ingeniously construct, and retire to during the interesting period of their accouchement. They remain in these dens, he says, for fourteen days, and sleep so soundly, that they cannot be awakened even by blows or wounds—getting, be it added, most remark-

ably fat during the time of their prolonged slumber. They then sit up, and fall to sucking their paws, which is the only food they have for subsistence. Theophrastus remarks, that any one who should take and seethe or bake bears' flesh during this period, would find it grow even when under the culinary process—a peculiarity which housewives would be glad to see extended to other viands.

Bears' flesh is well known as an article of food: Sir Edward Parry found it palatable enough fare in the arctic regions; and, together with stewed white-dogs, beavers' tails, fish, buffaloes, corn, and Ishkodaiacoabo (or fire-drink), it figures as a choice delicacy in the feasts of the North American Indians. Perhaps they find the consumption of it favourable to their venatorial pursuits; and just as Cardan contends, that it was their habit of feeding on the wild-dogs that made the Corsican islanders, like the dogs—cruel, faithless, bold, prompt, nimble, and strong—the Indian may find, that by feeding on its flesh he becomes like the bear—a wary, expert, daring, and sure-footed hunter. Pliny recommends the fat of the bear, as also do our modern perfumers, to the bald-headed, as tending to develop and nourish the hair. To the people of Kamtschatka, it supplies a grateful and savoury repast, and is, when melted, employed as a frequent substitute for oil. The ladies of that favoured region cause the intestines of the beast to be scraped and cleaned, and wear them in that state as sun-shades. The Kamtschatka Russians use such of these intestines as they can obtain in a transparent condition by way of window-panes, 'to expel the winter's flaw' without excluding the light. Bruin's shoulder-blades are turned by them into sickles, and his haunches they hang for ornaments.

Once a favourite with emperors, the bear is still an object of solicitude to the dignitaries of a certain continental town. Berne, in Switzerland, considers that bears are identified with its prosperity. Outside the town is a properly formed pit for the residence of a pair of bears, to which all strangers pay a visit. These bears may be said to have a corporate existence. They never die, for as soon as one drops off, another supplies its place. They also possess an endowment for their support. When the French took possession of Switzerland, they made short work with the patrimony of the bears, and, like other hapless victims of revolutionary movements, the pair of bruins were thrown for support on charitable contributions. Afterwards, when things righted themselves in Switzerland, a new patrimony was assigned to the bears of Berne; and the last time we saw them, they were leading that easy self-satisfied life common alike to two and four footed pensioners.

THINGS TALKED OF IN LONDON.

March 1853.

THE sudden arrival of winter with a low temperature, has again verified the Registrar-general's statement, that a fall of the thermometer to freezing-point never fails to raise by some hundreds the weekly return of mortality in the metropolis. The mean temperature of the second week in January was 45 degrees, and the deaths were 1001; in the second week in February, it had sunk to 29 degrees, and the deaths numbered 1328—a remarkable and seriously suggestive increase. 'It appears,' says the Registrar, 'that while persons of all ages have suffered, the severity of the weather has been most fatal to persons in advanced life. Well-heated apartments, warm clothing, and comfortable lodging at night, at all times necessary in this climate, are indispensable at this season to the aged, who find it difficult to support life when the temperature has fallen below a certain point.' For the moment, the subject is exciting attention; and well it may, for it is too certain that

we have habituated ourselves to neglect the precautions which winter always necessitates, even in our, of late, mild climate. Of all preservative agents, caloric is the most potent, and yet the fact is too commonly ignored. It will have to become one of the dogmas of public-health doctrine.

From all accounts, great exertions are being made to improve agricultural operations. A digging-machine has just been invented in Oxfordshire, which is said to do its work far more thoroughly than the plough, and far more in accordance with the needs of modern husbandry. And the Agricultural Society having offered a prize for a manure equal to guano at a cost of £5 a ton, Mr Pusey has shewn that the conditions are satisfied by nitrate of soda, and at a charge less than that specified. He says, in illustration, that forty-six acres of land, if cropped with barley, and dressed with seventeen hundredweights of nitrate, would yield an increase of eighty sacks beyond the quantity usually obtained. A cargo of this fertiliser was first brought to England in 1820, but for want of a purchaser, was thrown overboard; a second importation took place in 1830; and from that date up to 1850, the quantity brought from Peru, where the supply is inexhaustible, was 239,860 tons; value, £5,000,000. With the price reduced to £8 a ton, Mr Pusey observes, 'our farmers might obtain from their own farms the whole foreign supply of wheat, without labour, and with but a few months' outlay of capital. I do not mean to say, that no failures will yet occur before we obtain a complete mastery over this powerful substance; but I am confident that, as California has been explored in our day, so a vast reservoir of nitrogen—the main desideratum for the worn-out fields of Europe—cannot long be left within a few miles of the sea, passed almost in sight by our steamers, yet still nearly inaccessible at the foot of the Andes.' A company to work the Peruvian nitrate might be formed, with much better hope of success than in prospecting for Australian nuggets.

Connected with this subject, is a result of 'unrestricted competition,' which is regarded with some interest—the Levant is becoming our chief source of corn-supply. We had so long been accustomed to look to the United States and the shores of the Baltic for surplus grain, that few persons thought of the course of trade taking a new direction. In 1841, we imported 230,000 quarters from the Russian ports on the Black Sea, and the Turkish and other ports on the Mediterranean. In 1852, the quantity from the same places was 1,700,000 quarters; shipped chiefly at Galatz, Ibrail, and other Turkish marts, which serve as outlets for the superabundant produce of Hungary and the Danubian provinces. Egypt, also, sent us last year 276,000 quarters. Nearly the whole of this trade is in the hands of Greek merchants established in England. It gives us an additional reason for preserving amicable relations with the East, and explains why the Turks do not wish to give up Kleik and Sutorino to Austria.

Another indication of social advancement is seen in the Excise returns just published. Paper, for instance,—the quantity charged with duty in 1851, was 150,903,543 lbs.; in 1852, it was 154,469,211 lbs. There is a great increase, too, in the article of soap—from 205,199,321 lbs. in 1851, to 224,059,700 lbs. in 1852. What would it not be with the duty off? An improvement has lately been introduced in the manufacture of paper from straw; and at a mill near Dublin a kind is now made which is white, smooth, and suitable for writing-paper. Ireland is advancing also in another branch of industry—the manufacture of beet-root sugar. The produce of last year amounted to 142 bags, containing from three to four hundredweights each: these have just been sold; and it is now contemplated to start two other establishments, on which 40,000 tons of the root may be produced in a year. At

present, 230 persons are employed in the manufacture; but if the project be carried out, this number will be largely increased, and a great addition made to Ireland's industrial resources. The Irish farmers might also turn their attention to the growing of chicory, with good assurance of a market, since government have rescinded their order concerning the adulteration of coffee, and now the retailers are left free to mix at their own discretion.

The ministerial declaration, that there shall be no more transportation of criminals to Australia, except to the Swan River colony, gives much satisfaction; but it adds to the gravity of the question: What shall we do with the wrong-doers? The people of Birmingham, encouraged by the success of a reformatory school, set on foot by Joseph Sturge, are about to try whether crime can be really prevented on a large scale, and so effected a disappearance of the opprobrium of civilisation—criminal classes. Meanwhile, are the culprits to be set to work, or otherwise punished? If transportation is to be a real punishment, why not choose some spot within the arctic circle? or employ them in reclaiming Morecambe Bay and the Solway sands from the sea?

By news from California, we learn that, owing to inclemency of weather and the stoppage of supplies, some unfortunate diggers had been starved to death. We shall hear of similar casualties from Australia, if the harvest prove deficient or the imports fall short—a contingency worth taking into consideration by intending emigrants. It is also worth while not to overlook the fact, that some of our city banks have found it necessary to raise the salaries of their junior clerks, in order to keep them from throwing up their situations for the gold-diggings; and other banks have advertised for clerks, all of which is an unmistakable sign of the times, and shews that, while clerks are at a premium, and sailors and labourers can strike for wages, we have still something to hope for in England. It would be well to remember, too, that there are other countries worth going to as well as Australia: a recent arrival of some thousands of pounds of wool from the Cape, is an example of what can be done in that colony; and it may be multiplied to any extent without fear of loss, for our woollen manufacturers will buy all that comes. Parts of South America, too, are well suited for the rearing of sheep. Mr McCann tells us, in his *Two Thousand Miles' Ride in the Argentine Provinces*, that land can be bought within fifty miles of Buenos Ayres at £2 an acre, and sheep at 3s. a dozen. Think of that—a sheep for 3d.! What prodigious wool-packs we might get from the Pampas, if the population were not so fond of weekly revolutions! Then, again, it is scarcely possible to read Major Strickland's *Twenty-seven Years in Canada*, and not see that the reward of honest industry in that country is certain and ample. The elements of prosperity are abundant: one of them, the forests, as shewn in a Report just published by the Canadian Institute, is too much neglected. They consider that the display made by the colony in the Great Exhibition, entitles them to hope that more of their timber may be introduced into Europe; and they have drawn up and circulated a list of different kinds of wood for that purpose. The value of the exports of potash and timber in 1851, amounted to £1,500,545 sterling. More than 120,000,000 superficial feet of pine plank and board, to say nothing of logs, are sent out of the country yearly. As one means of promoting trade, a project is formed for a mail direct from Liverpool to Quebec, the distance between the two places by the Strait of Belle Isle being 400 miles shorter than to Boston. The contract for the Provincial Ocean Steamers, provides for fourteen fortnightly trips from Liverpool to Quebec and Montreal in the summer, and five monthly trips to Portland, state of Maine, in winter. The vessels are to be of 1500 tons burden, and

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are to carry steerage passengers for six guineas, including provisions. And further, as a canal is to be made to connect Lake Champlain with the St Lawrence, and important lines of railway are in process of construction, it is manifest that Canada offers a legitimate field for commercial enterprise. The Canadian Institute above mentioned has been in existence about a year. It was formed for the promotion of science, and for the collecting and digesting of facts in geology, natural history, &c.; and as the members are permitted to hold their meetings in the old Government House at Toronto, and are aided by a small sum voted by the colonial legislature, we may hope that a long career of usefulness is before them.

The prospect of a copyright treaty being carried into effect between this country and the United States, is provoking discussion among those most interested. Some think it best to leave things as they are—the class herein comprised may be easily guessed at—but the greater party believe, that books are not written for poachers to appropriate at pleasure, and are willing to see the copyright properly secured to the author. If we really get the treaty, it will be a heavy blow to certain publishers. The great sale of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* has perhaps accelerated the measure. Apropos of this book, it has been reproduced in four different translations in France, but it does not appeal to French sympathies as it did to ours. The Germans, too, have translated the touching narrative, and are circulating it largely; and a single translation has appeared in Russian. Will the Muscovite serfs be permitted to read it?

Captain Penny is trying to get up an 'Arctic Company' for the establishment of a whaling station in Northumberland Inlet, Davis' Strait; screw-steamer to be used to fish between Greenland and Nova Zembla; while the mineral deposits on the shores of the inlet, among which plumbago is said to be comprised, are to be worked as an additional source of profit. Supplementary arctic expeditions are again to be sent out: the *Rattlesnake* has sailed with supplies for the Behring-Strait parties; Lady Franklin is going to send the *Isabel* steamer, uselessly, it may be said, to the same region; and Captain Inglefield is to go out to Beechey Island, at the entrance of Wellington Channel, in the *Phenix* steamer, to inquire the news respecting Sir Edward Belcher. Dr Rae will do what he can in another overland journey; and Lieutenant Kane, with his American explorers, will again join the search, resolved to find the pole if they can find nothing else. The prodigious cost of these expeditions makes one regret, that more pains had not been taken to give them a systematic character and purpose; we should not then have had so many desultory and fruitless attempts as have been made since 1848 to discover the long-lost Franklin party.

Our Asiatic Society have had an interesting communication from Colonel Rawlinson, who writes, that he has found a large number of Scythian inscriptions, which are allied to the Median dialects, and of an age prior to the reign of Nebuchadnezzar. Taking the term Scythic in its widest sense, he considers the Hamite nations—Cush, Misraim, Nimrud, and Canaan—to be Scythian, but partially intermixed in course of time with the Shemite races. This discovery is said to clear up difficulties which have long existed in the patriarchal genealogies, and in the traditions of Grecian history, and it will help to a better knowledge generally of the period in question. The colonel adds, that he finds much in the Talmud to aid his researches, and he has been enabled to fix the geography of certain doubtful places; among these, it appears that Birs is the ancient Sepharvaim. Another illustration of Scripture was found by the Turks in a search at Nebbi Yunus—a bronze statue, with the name of Esarhaddon, in the ancient character, on the breast.

Captain Allen is so desirous to convert the greater part of the Holy Land into a great sea by his project for a canal from the Red Sea, across the sandy tract at the head of the Gulf of Akabah, that he has offered to go out and survey the spot if properly supported. It is a scheme we may very safely leave to future generations. The exploration of Africa is more to our present purpose, but its accomplishment is not easy. News has just come to hand of the death of Dr Overweg, whose valuable labours have been frequently mentioned in the Journal. He was seized with fever at Kuka, and removed for change of air to a favourite woody spot about ten miles from Lake Tchad, where he died on the 20th September last. Fortunately, his companion, Dr Barth, retains his health and energy, and being well provided with servants and animals, will pursue his travels; when last heard of, he was about to set out for Timbuctoo. The map of the discoveries already made, embraces a vast interior region heretofore unknown. Dr Vogel, another young German, is now on his way with stores and scientific instruments, and accompanied by two sappers and miners, to join Dr Barth; and if they do not fall victims to the climate, we may expect news of further explorations before many months are over.

A debate which our Civil Engineers have had about heated air as a motive-power, took, on the whole, an unfavourable view of the calorific question; they will, however, wait the result of further inquiry and experiment. In another quarter, we hear of attempts to render electro-magnetism available as a locomotive power, and with greater assurance of success than any hitherto attempted. We shall see. A plan is being tried for converting the muddy deposit at the bottom of the Thames into a potent and indorosus manure, to which we may devoutly wish success, as it will remove a cause of pollution from our river and atmosphere, and save dishonest people the trouble of pounding red sandstone to sell as guano. Hollow glass-walls are coming more into use in gardens, and some attempts have been made at roofing with transparent tiles. In Prussia, green glass-tiles, a quarter-inch thick, have been introduced with entire success. An important subject has come before the Society of Arts—namely, 'On uniformity in weights, measures, and moneys'; it is one which must be daily talked about if it is ever to be adopted. That it ought to be, no one doubts who is able to form an opinion thereupon. Our 'Department of Practical Art' is about to establish district schools of art and elementary drawing; and the Museum of Economic Geology is to be renamed College of Practical Science, and to co-operate with two other industrial institutions in Dublin, under control of the Board of Trade. This is a preliminary step to the grand central college at Kensington, into which it is ultimately to merge. Art and science are thus to be brought together; and as we have an inspector for the former, so are we to have one for the latter; and thus we may consider that the first step is taken in the scheme for giving the best effect to the art and science of the country at large. A new application of photography is talked about: it is to make light available for calico-printing. The time required for the process is said to be from two to twenty minutes, and it can be made use of for silk, woollen, or flax, as well as cotton. The material, after being dried in the dark, is exposed to the light with a perforated screen of paper, by which the pattern is formed. Projectors are busy in many places upon the electric light, and some of them are erelong to succeed in producing it. It is one of those things which we must believe only on the soundest demonstration. And to conclude with a fact interesting to all who are interested in books: the Academy of Moral and Political Science of Paris have elected Mr Macaulay one of their members, and the king of Prussia has made him a knight of his *Order of Merit*.

MORTALITY AMONG MASONS.

Masons are continually surrounded with an atmosphere of fine, impalpable dust. By the ordinary act of breathing, this dust is received into the air-passages and the lungs, where it slowly accumulates. Inflammation supervenes—slight at first, it is ultimately acute. A wasting then begins, accompanied by spitting. In a short number of years, a mason dare not walk sharply up a hill. The breathing is impeded, the circulation is interrupted, the blood is imperfectly supplied with oxygen. General debility is then felt—rapid consumption occurs—and at length the disease which originated in his apprenticeship, terminates with his premature death. This is the disease known among the men as the 'mason's trouble.' It is termed *phthisis* in medical phraseology. Dr Alison has said, that 'there is hardly an instance of a mason regularly employed in hewing stones in Edinburgh, living free from phthisical symptoms to the age of fifty.' We can go lower than that: we can state, from pretty extensive observation, that there are none but suffer from it at forty. We do not, in truth, know ten hewers (working) in Edinburgh above fifty, and only two above sixty. It is to be observed, however, that the celebrated Craigleath stone, of which the New Town of Edinburgh was built, contributed more largely to this characteristic disease than the softer stones at present in use. An old Craigleath man was done at thirty, and died at thirty-five. . . . Out of twenty-seven apprentices—fine, young, healthy men—who began with Forsyth at the erection of Cramond Bridge twenty-six years ago, only two survive. Out of 120 hewers who worked at the High School in '27, we know of only ten survivors. In a squad of thirty stout hewers, who began the Edinburgh and Glasgow Bank twelve years ago, only one-half lived to see it finished. The stone-cutting and carving of the Scott Monument killed twenty-three of the finest men in Edinburgh. . . . The stones, let us humbly suggest, might be worked damp, and, we are informed, worked better. The sheds, too, might be better ventilated. . . . The men had better endure the wind and rain, the storm and tempest in their greatest fury, than endure for a single week the atmosphere of a shed. Another corrective has been pointed out by Dr Alison, who recommends the Edinburgh hewers to wear mustaches and beards. It is a notorious fact, that cavalry regiments suffer less than regiments of the line from consumption. Their beards and mustaches act like a respirator; and the same line of reasoning applies with greater force to stone-masons. In the south of Germany—in Bavaria and Würtemberg, for example—where freestone is extensively worked, and where the masons are fine-looking, muscular fellows with large beards, such a disease as phthisis is never heard of.—Abridged from a series of articles on the Condition of the Working-classes in the Edinburgh News.

NOON IN THE TROPICS.

The soil appeared to undulate, from the effect of mirage, without a breath of wind being felt. The sun was near the zenith, and its dazzling light, reflected from the surface of the river, contrasted with the reddish vapours that enveloped every surrounding object. How vivid is the impression produced by the calm of nature, at noon, in these burning climates! The beasts of the forests retire to the thickets; the birds hide themselves beneath the foliage of the trees, or in the crevices of the rocks. Yet, amidst this apparent silence, when we lend an attentive ear to the most feeble sounds transmitted through the air, we hear a dull vibration, a continual murmur, a hum of insects, filling, if we may use the expression, all the lower strata of the air. Myriads of insects creep upon the soil and flutter round the plants parched by the heat of the sun. A confused noise issues from every bush, from the decayed trunks of trees, from the clefts of rocks, and from the ground undermined by lizards, millipedes, and *cecidias*. These are so many voices proclaiming to us that all nature breathes; and that, under a thousand different forms, life is diffused throughout the cracked and dusty soil, as well as in the bosom of the waters, and in the air around us.—*Humboldt's Personal Narrative*.

FADELESS IS A LOVING HEART.

'Thou shalt not rob me, thievish Time,
Of all my blessings, all my joy:
I have some jewels in my heart
Which thou art powerless to destroy.'

SUNNY eyes may lose their brightness;
Nimble feet forget their lightness;
Pearly teeth may know decay;
Raven tresses turn to gray;
Cheeks be pale, and eyes be dim;
Faint the voice, and weak the limb;
But though youth and strength depart,
Fadeless is a loving heart.

Like the little mountain-flower,
Peeping forth in wintry hour,
When the summer's breath is fled,
And the gaudier flowerets dead;
So when outward charms are gone,
Brighter still doth blossom on,
Despite Time's destroying dart,
The gentle, kindly loving heart.

Wealth and talents will avail
When on life's rough sea we sail;
Yet the wealth may melt like snow,
And the wit no longer glow:
But more smooth we'll find the sea,
And our course the fairer be,
If our pilot, when we start,
Be a kindly loving heart.

Ye in worldly wisdom old—
Ye who bow the knee to gold,
Doth this earth as lovely seem
As it did in life's young dream,
Ere the world had crusted o'er,
Feelings good and pure before—
Ere ye sold at Mammon's mart
The best yearnings of the heart?

Grant me, Heaven, my earnest prayer—
Whether life of ease or care
Be the one to me assigned,
That each coming year may find
Loving thoughts and gentle words
Twined within my bosom's chords,
And that age may but impart
Riper freshness to my heart!

T. R.

REPOSITORY OF TRACTS.

We have been asked by various persons, whether the cheap publication lately commenced by us, under the title of CHAMBERS'S REPOSITORY OR INSTRUCTIVE AND AMUSING TRACTS, is a re-issue of the MISCELLANY OF TRACTS, published a few years ago. We have to intimate, that the Repository now issuing is an entirely new work; it resembles the MISCELLANY only in size and price; the matter is new, and prepared on purpose. A Number appears every week, a Part every month, and a Volume, neatly done up for the pocket, at the end of every two months. Two volumes (ls. each) have now appeared.

Part V. just issued, price 5d.

The Sixteenth Volume of CHAMBERS'S POCKET MISCELLANY, price 6d., is now published. Of this work, designed as a Literary Companion for the Railway, the Fireside, or the Bush, a volume appears every month, and may be had of all Booksellers.

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